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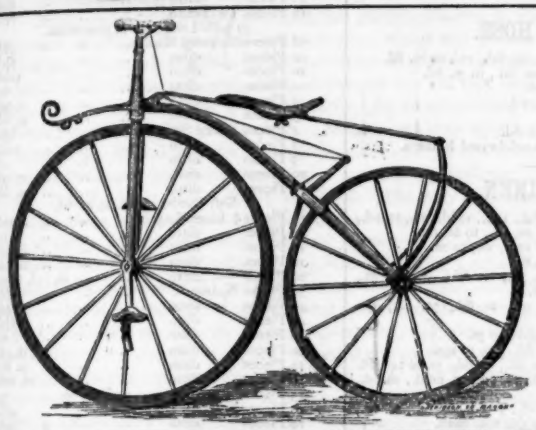

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Great Variety of Sleeping Nets.

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Ties, Pocket Handkerchiefs, &c., all largely reduced.

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Several Hundred Yards Real Thread Edge, 4½d., 5½d., 6½d., 8½d., and 10½d.
Several Hundred Yards Lace, 6½d., 8½d., to 5s. 6d.
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Real Maltese Collars, 11½d., worth 2s. 6d.
Ditto Cluny, 1s., worth 2s. 6d.
Ditto, ditto, 10½d., worth 1s. 9d., in great variety.
Real Coifs, real Berthas, real Handkerchiefs, &c., very much reduced.
Honiton Collars, Berthas, Laces, prices will astonish.
Several hundred pounds' worth of Imitation Cluny Lace, new patterns, low prices.
Black Falls, Pellerines, Jackets, Berthas, &c.

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18 Dozen Muslin Tie Handkerchiefs .. 8½d.
50 Dozen Muslin Ties .. 9½d.
A very large assortment of Garibaldi Jackets, from 2s. 6d. to 25s. Purchased very cheap.
About 15 Dozens Muslin Chemisettes, nicely worked, 11½d. to 15s.
Bodices, Muslin Crossovers, all new this season.

IRISH CAMBRIC HANDKERCHIEFS

40 Dozen .. .. .. 11½d. half-dozen.
50 Dozen .. .. .. 1s. 2d. "
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50 Dozen .. .. .. 1s. 6d. "
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And so on to .. .. .. 9s. "
Ready Hemmed .. 1s. 1½d. to 9s. "
Hem Stitched .. 4½d. to 5s. each
Sewed Edgings, Scollops, and Insertions, amounting to upwards of £2,000.
Every Article Marked in Plain Figures.

THE KING O' SCOTS.

WE should feel rather puzzled if we were called upon to account in full for all the applause which was bestowed upon this drama on Monday night. At the same time, we gladly added to it our silent assent in acknowledgment of a performance which was at least free from any very atrocious crimes on the part either of author, manager, or actors. Looked at as a literary effort, the drama has but very small merit. It is the production of a literary hack. As an adaptation, its great fault lies in its want of condensation. Not the incidents only, but the humour, the mental activity, the idiosyncracies of the characters ought to be condensed in dramatising either a novel or a paraphrase of history. In this respect Mr. Halliday has failed. The play lasts over three hours and a half, and it is tedious in other respects besides the length of time. In reading a novel, the time spent over it is in truer proportion to the procession of events than it is in witnessing a dramatic performance. In precisely that proportion may the dialogue and the gradual revelation of character approach real life. But, on the stage, every word and every gesture can only be represented, and this is felt, consciously or unconsciously, by all our best dramatic authors. Shakespere himself would not pretend that in *Othello*, or *As You Like It*, he has simply torn a leaf out of life. Was any clown ever as deliciously absurd as Touchstone? Was any woman ever half as charming as Rosalind? Did any man ever pay the compliment of jealousy as nobly as Othello? What Shakspere did was cunningly to focus the individuality of old friends upon men and women who strut before you for half an hour. Or take a much smaller example, in the person of Mr. Robertson. He succeeds in reflecting the tone, the refinements, the little martyrdoms, the intellectual playfulness of modern society by intensifying them upon a little world of men and women who become, for the time, his mirrors. Now, Mr. Halliday, in realising for us London life of 250 years ago, has altogether ignored this art of focussing a strong light upon the peculiar manners and the modes of thought of the period. It is only by clumsily introducing the conventional rising of apprentices, and putting every now and then an obsolete expression, such as "What d'ye lack," into the mouths of his characters, that we are reminded of the period of the play at all. This is all very inartistic, and in the style of tragedians at penny theatres, who delineate he British sailor by ejaculating "Ship a-hoy!" and jerking up their trousers in the intervals of dancing ingenious hornpipes. As a dramatisation it wants colour, and as an adaptation it wants concentration.

We hardly know whether it is the fault of the actors or of the author, that, in two notable instances, the conceptions of Sir Walter Scott are altered and spoiled by fresh touches. Trapbois the miser, for instance, whose madness and misery ought to excite nothing but pity, is made to excite contempt by his repeated, drivelling, meant-to-be-humourous appeal "for a consideration." Or, again, Jim Vin the apprentice, whose real love for Margaret is intended to make him respectable although misguided, becomes, in the hands of Mr. Halliday and Mr. Leitch, a buffoon whom Margaret never could have tolerated for a moment. The play contains several long monologues in the true legitimate drama style. This is a very simple way of informing the audience what is going on in the insides of the heroine and her lover, but it would be truer to life if we only gathered it indirectly from the conversation and the manners of the characters. In addition, then, to the unimportance of this drama, looked at as a literary production, we think we can trace the cunning hand of the Philistine in the ingenious marrying of the original.

Having delivered ourselves of our opinion from the literary point of view, we hasten to congratulate the Prince's Theatre upon the manner in which the play is put upon the stage, and to congratulate Mr. Calvert upon his success in both his characters. His acting of King James and the miser Trapbois is as perfect as anything he has ever done in Manchester. If, after seeing the piece, those parts of the *Fortunes of Nigel* which describe the personal appearance of the two characters be re-read, it will be found that his make-up is absolutely correct. Every point of Scott's description has been noted and remembered. The subtleties of King James's character are indicated with real refinement. Nothing could be better than his alternations between cowardice and meanness to something almost like courage and Scottish shrewdness, the whole clothed with a garment of irritable nervousness and childish self-conceit. The ungainliness of his person is acted with rare delicacy. It is not possible to speak with equal confidence of his Miser Trapbois; but we believe that it is as fine, if not superior, to the impersonation of the King. In tragedy, we have not the same experience in real life to guide us in criticising the accuracy of a performance. We must accept Mr. Calvert's Miser as a creation which is admirable and true in the measure that it moves us. Judged by this standard, the Miser of Mr. Calvert is a great creation.

There is scarcely any other performer in the piece who deserves particular mention, but as Mr. Calvert is nearly always on the stage we do not feel the poverty of the company so much as usual. That, in the main, the company is very feeble is a crushing fact, so much so that to speak of it with severity would be pedantic, while over-indulgence is always inane. To measure such actors as Mr. Stretton and Mr. Dewhirst constantly by some standard which they can never reach would be only a waste of time. The difficulty is to fix it at an elevation which is neither too high nor too low. It appears to us that three months of burlesque acting has demoralised some of the stock actors, and that they have not yet forgotten the poetic licence of pantomime. The pantaloon peeps out most unmistakably in the cynical courtier of Mr. Edmonds. He waddles about the stage with an expression of the red-hot-poker trick in his face, while he instinctively backs in the direction of the side scene, where, for the last three months, he has had his head knocked by Mr. Leclerq. Mr. Leitch, also, no doubt in honour of the pantomime, makes Jin Vin a good-natured idiot, and quite compromises his position in the sympathies of the audience; while Mr. Stretton, deprived of the bâton of King Counterfeit, with which he enacted many a noble piece of tragedy, plays in the new piece with no more animation than a wax doll. Mrs. Egan is capital as the gossip and go between, while Miss Radcliffe, who has hardly been seen in Manchester in anything much higher than pantomime (always remembering her playing of Lucius in *Julius Cæsar*), has seemingly made great improvement. It has fallen to her to undertake the small and rather thankless part of Martha Trapbois, and she plays it like an artist.

We notice with pleasure the unobtrusive good taste and the equality of the scenery, from the beginning to the end of the drama. The realism for which dramatic authors and scenic actors are outbidding each other just now, is often defeated by the concentration upon one scene in a drama of all their best resources of lime-light, and real water, and express trains. We often wonder whether realism on the stage is a desirable ambition; whether gorgeous waterfalls do not dwarf the actors; whether lime-light does not render the virtuous heroine additionally unreal. In the figure pictures of Titian and Tintoretto it will be observed that the landscapes and backgrounds are conventional both in form and in the tone of the colours, and we believe that this treatment is based upon the true secret of realism in relation to figures on the stage as well as on canvas.

The dangers of the streets are on the increase. At Birkenhead, a quiet, steady-going horse was startled by a velocipede, threw its rider in consequence, and nearly killed him. Another charged an ox, but in this case the bicycle and its rider got the worst of it. Last Sunday evening, about nine o'clock, we encountered a velocipede pursuing its mad career on the footpath in Strangeways. We don't object to velocipedes in their proper places, but let them be kept out of the public streets.

PREMIERS AND PUGILISTS.

Look upon this picture and on this.—Hamlet.

TWO pictures, representing different phases of society and life, have attracted our attention in the shop windows this week. As works of art they are almost beneath criticism, but both are suggestive, and give rise to sundry reflections. One is an engraving of a picture painted a few years since, purporting to be a representation of Rotten Row at the height of the season; the other is a series of unpretending woodcuts, illustrating the professional and pugilistic career of the late Tom Sayers.

The view of the famous Ride is not without interest, although it presents some rather odd peculiarities. The perspective is *sui generis*, and the statue of the Duke, at Hyde Park corner, looks to us much closer to the Marble Arch than we were in the habit of supposing. The loungers outside the rails, who generally take some interest in the equestrians, have almost all turned their backs upon them, precisely as artists are in the habit of depicting cricket matches during the most exciting portion of the game, when Butterfingers is running after the ball for his bare life, and all the spectators have their backs turned upon the players, doubtless to enable the artist to present us with their portraits. The figures, both on horseback and on foot, are on too pigmy a scale to be at all striking, and the Princess of Wales's palfrey does not come much "nearer to natur" than the spotted horse painted by poor Caleb Plummer. But, small as they are, some of the portraits are good and easily recognised. In a conspicuous position is Lord Palmerston on his white horse. The venerable statesman is in the act of saluting a party of the Royal Family who are approaching. Reflection first: Palmerston has been dead three years and a half, and the pale horse has got another rider, referred to in the Revelation of St. John the Divine; but, in the course of that time, we have had four Prime Ministers. Lords Russell and Derby have taken leave of official life; the much-reviled Disraeli has been Premier and created a batch of Archbishops, Chancellors, Dukes, Bishops, and other peers. Mr. Gladstone has succeeded to the post, and we learn that an instrument has been providentially raised up to exercise retributive justice upon the right hon. gentleman, in the person of the junior member for Salford. From a Prime Minister opposed to reform and a quiescent Parliament, we have arrived at household suffrage; and the Irish Church, to abolish which, according to Sir George Grey and Mr. Cardwell, would be likely to bring about a revolution, is in *articulo mortis*. Other prominent figures in the picture have also passed away. There is Black Bottle, the last of the Cardigans, who escaped the Balaclava guns, to come home and lose his life by falling off his horse, in the most unexpected manner; and here, too, is old Viscount Combermere, whose seat on horseback and jaunty cock of the hat could be recognised anywhere. The Prince and Princess of Wales, the Duke of Edinburgh, and the Duke of Cambridge are riding abreast, and the Prince and Princess of Hesse behind them. These are all good likenesses, particularly that of the Commander-in-Chief, against whom "our own correspondents" are so fond of girding at present. Formerly it used to be the Heir Apparent against whom these omniscient gentlemen loved to make insinuations, just as, in bygone years, the late Prince Consort used to be a target for backstairs scandal. Behind the members of the Royal Family are a number of gentlemen in attendance, of whom we only recognise Colonel Jemmy Macdonald, with his silvery hair. This is the gentleman who used to stroll about the trenches and defences in the Crimea while the shells and balls were flying about, with as much *nonchalance* as he had previously displayed when sunning himself in Pall Mall. Of the loungers on foot we can only recognise a few; but there is no mistaking Mr. Disraeli, and the big, burly figure of Sir Robert Peel. Mr. Bernal Osborne also is recognisable. Will no constituency send him back to the House? We miss him sadly, and if he likes to come down and stand for Manchester, in case of Mr. Birley's being unseated, we know of at least one vote which is at his service.

To pass from the Celestials of the Row to the Terrestrials of the P.R. is a transition as easy and natural as it is for a London swell to attend a prize-fight. From the work of art before us, illustrative of the career of Mr. Sayers, we learn that he fought fourteen prize battles, of which he only lost one, when, after a struggle lasting over two hours, he succumbed to the artistic skill of Nat Langham, "Owd Nat," as his familiars call him. It appears that Langham, previous to his turning prizefighter, had been a gentleman's butler—rather a singular change of life, to pass from bottles and burgundy to bruising. In the woodcuts before us, Sayers and his antagonists are represented in various fighting attitudes. In one he is, what is technically called, administering the upper cut to the unhappy Mr. Aaron Jones, a blow which, when given with sufficient force upon the jaw, produces upon the recipient thereof immediate concussion of the brain. In another, to continue the phraseology of the genii of the Ring, he is delivering his left bang upon the proboscis of Bill Benjamin. In a third he has Mr. Thomas Paddock's head in a position in which we trust our readers may never find themselves or their affairs—that is, in Chancery. In a fourth, by the use of an instrument known as a bunch of fives, he is turning on the ruby in copious streams from the tap of Bob Brettle. In a fifth, he has landed his right upon that feature of his antagonist's face which sporting writers designate the trap of a familiar vegetable, the failure of which was the immediate cause of the repeal of the corn laws, plus the strenuous exertions of the late Mr. Cobden and the Right Hon. John Bright, M.P. In a sixth, Tom is standing smiling benignly over a prostrate foe. Before Sayers entered the ring he fought a battle in Manchester, which came about in this wise. At that time he was a bricksetter, and was engaged in that capacity at the erection of Belle Vue Prison. Connected with the works was a big bully of a navvy, who tyrannized over the workmen and was the nuisance of the place. Sayers, who was then but a stripling, undertook, like the Psalmist, to go forth and meet this Philistine. Accordingly, one sovereign a-side was staked, and on the following morning at four o'clock, just to get the matter over before work began, the antagonists met, and in the course of twenty minutes Goliath of Gath was prostrated like his predecessor, but allowed to leave the field with his head on.

What a waste of force was the subsequent career of Tom Sayers! The Duke of Wellington used to say that in that mighty hunter, Mr. Assheton Smith, the army lost a splendid brigadier and cavalry officer. A reviewer has lately said that, had accident not made John Roberts a professional billiard player, he would most likely have cropped up as a mathematician or an engineer. Sayers ought either to have been on board a man-of-war or in a cavalry regiment. What a swordsman the service lost in him! When General Scarlett, in the Crimea, charged at the head of his brigade and overthrew the Russian horse, scattering the squadrons like chaff, Tom should have partaken in that glorious episode of the war. That large, well-formed hand, that supple wrist, forearm of solid ivory, biceps like a great iron boss, those brawny shoulders and slim waist, could not have failed to make havoc among the enemy. But, alas! alas! "Poor Tom's a-cold," dead under forty, of self-indulgence and dissipation. "'Tis true, 'tis pity, pity 'tis, 'tis true;" but even Nero had flowers strewn on his grave by some unknown hand, and Tom was a hero in his way. Most likely, had he lived in ancient days, he would have made sport for kings, become a gladiator, and been "butchered to make a Roman holiday." Palmerston and Sayers, the Premier and the pugilist, had several qualities in common. Both were thoroughly English, whatever that means; both were possessed of vast powers of physical endurance, and each had a place in the hearts of their countrymen.

We were under the impression that the Ring was defunct, but it seems we were mistaken, and that there is some life in the old dog yet. Two little affairs came off last week. The Manchester newspapers inform us that a battle took place near Warrington, between Bill Brown and Miller, both of Salford. Mill-er seems an appropriate name for a boxer, nevertheless he suffered defeat. After the battle, the men, and a number of aiders and abettors, were taken into custody, and bound over to keep the peace for twelve months. The other fight took place last Friday, at Westminster, the combatants being the famous Bill Merrypebble, the Greenwich Pet, and Ward, the Northamptonshire slogger. The Big'un led off with a vigorous onslaught. This riled Merrypebble, who countered heavily, but lost his temper, as usual. After severe exchanges, the battle was drawn.

The prettiest actress in Paris caused a great fluttering in the breast of a rich foreigner. The other night he presented himself at her house, having taken the precaution to precede his arrival with a packet containing ten thousand franc notes. Her reception of him was charming and everything he could wish. On taking leave of the tender object of his passion, he said, "Permit me to call again, some time, my dear child." "Are you then so very rich?" asked the innocent, casting down her eyes.

A STARTLING COINCIDENCE.

We believe that a generation is usually considered to be embraced within fourteen years. A generation of readers of the fugitive pennyworths of the day will hardly last more than fourteen days. Hence, as it is nearly a year since the present writer first introduced his Discovery of the Law of Coincidence to an appreciative public, it will be best to recapitulate somewhat, in order to explain the nature and working of this great Law, before calling attention to the latest and most startling exemplification of its working.

The Science of Averages and the Law of Chances have fought their way into the position of being duly received and accredited facts. No one, now-a-days, imagines that when an actuary tells you that in a given time a given number of people aged sixty will die, that he is talking like a charlatan. All people accept his statement as a sound deduction from the Law of Averages, and every man of sixty looks upon every other man of sixty as the unfortunate being in whose person the truth of the law is to be demonstrated. He doesn't mean to die himself, neither does he dream of impugning the law.

To take an instance of the Law of Chances. A moment's reflection will tell us that if two white balls and one red are placed in a box, and shaken up, and then one only is rolled out, it is two to one that it is a white one which appears. It may not happen the first or the second time, but try it five hundred times, and that will be the result. The Law of Chances is a constant law. Its method of procedure is always the same, always to be calculated upon. Provided the elements of uncertainty are known, the exact ratio of chance for or against an event can be accurately stated. If the area be large enough, the event can be foretold to a nicety. For instance, if Mr. Boshley, M.P., speak on the state of trade, it is a hundred to one that he never uses the word "cotton," and ten thousand to one that he does say "raw material" more than once. If Mr. J. Stalybridge, X-M.P., address a public audience, it may be predicted as a certainty that he will drop seventy-five per cent. of his "H's." If you have a Ritualistic beneficed clergyman, and a Ritualistic licensed parson, the chances amount to a certainty that the Bishop of Manchester will let the former alone and squelch the latter. In fact, so generally reliable is the Law of Chances, that life would be reduced to a series of monotonous and anticipatable certainties, were it not for the disturbing and disrupting force of the Law of Coincidence—a Law of capricious action, now active, now passive, but, whenever it does manifest itself, always overriding and nullifying the Laws of Chances and of Averages.

The Law of Coincidence holds much the same place in the Philosophy of Human Events as comets do in Astronomy. In ordered circular and orbital round spin earth, moon, and planets. So exact and so reliable are these movements, that an eclipse can be foretold a thousand year's hence, and the moon's weight can be estimated, like that of a prize ox, to a score. So for weeks, days, and years; and just when it is almost certain that all the stellar universe thus marches in uniform order, there whisks in an erratic comet, and upsets it all. Precisely in like manner does the Law of Coincidence intervene in human affairs.

To illustrate this. If I feel that I am admirably adapted to be in possession of the estates of the Duke of Devonshire, or for the occupation of a post of confidence, with a "free access to the till," or for the reception of a public testimonial," the Law of Chances will show that the odds against my feelings being gratified are so enormous as to render that gratification almost impossible. And only once in a century will the Law of Coincidence interfere to assist me. Again, if I have the appointment to a highly-remunerated public office, demanding in its occupant very special qualifications and gifts, the Law of Chances says that it is a thousand to one that I do not find that gifted individual in the bosom of my own family, or among my relatives or intimate friends. But in a vast majority of such cases the Law of Coincidence will assert itself, and the exactly fitting person will be discovered in my son, or cousin, or, at worst, in my wife's brother, or her sister's husband's aunt's son. When the late deputy-mastership of the Mint was vacant, considering that the House of Commons and the leaders of both parties stood pledged to the principle that such posts should only go to men intimately skilled in the technicalities of the place, that if possible the promotion should go in the office, and in no case should the place be filled from political or party motives: with these premises, according to the Law of Chances, it was an absolute certainty that the promotion would go in the Mint, or that some eminent metallurgist or assayer would be selected from the outside world. Here, however, the Law of Coincidence glided in, and the right man was found in Mr. Disraeli's secretary. Again, this having occurred, by the Law of Chances it was a thousand to one that that most virtuous and immaculate of statesmen, William Ewart Gladstone, would have overwhelmed his antagonist with an eruption of eloquent denunciation. No such thing. Having himself had to obey the law, and feeling that its force would lay heavy upon him again, he complimented the Right Honourable Gentleman on his loyal obedience to one of the fundamental laws of public life.

By this time our readers will be prepared for an axiomatic declaration of the Law of Coincidence. It is this: *That whenever a substantial public benefit has to be conferred, the exact proper person to receive it will be found among the relatives or intimate friends of those in whose gift it lies.*

But it may be asked: what is the utility of enunciating such a law? Simply this: As in bellicose times it was a high Christian virtue to stay bloodshed, so in these days of penny papers it is a patriotic virtue to stop unnecessary and futile inkshed. And from an ignorance of the very existence of this law, much tall talk and taller writing is constantly being wasted. Whenever this great Law asserts itself in a sufficiently noticeable manner, a huge clatter of indignation arises in all places of public resort; the *Telegraph* blusters, the *Examiner and Times* shoots one of its high-spirited darts, and the sedate *Guardian* shakes its head over the paragraph announcing it, and lets fall upon the paper a drop of *eau sucré* from one eye, and a globule of vitriol from the other. As well might they rage against the sunset. One is just as much a Law of Nature as the other. We laugh at the poor African who, when no rain comes, brings out his Fetish and wallops it; and yet we are absurd enough to admire the frenzy of our able Editors raving against an equally natural law. We remember well that when Lord Canning was appointed Governor General of India, the graceful statistic flow of Mr. Henry Ashworth's periods rose almost into the sublime of denunciation. "Who do they send out?" he asked, "Why, *a Lord!* A Lord! They send out a Lord!" We recollect making two reflections on that convincing and exhaustive oration. 1st. How calculated such dispassionate speeches, so beautifully free from class prejudice, were to raise the Chamber in public estimation; and, 2ndly, How strange it was that one who had mastered the Laws of Political Economy until they had supersaturated his very being, and he was actually salivated with them, should be so blind to another and even

greater Law. By a Law as irrefragable as that no Scotchman keeps a pig, Lord Palmerston was compelled to find the fitting Governor among his own intimate friends. And had the appointment been placed in the hands of his Censor, he, too, would have had to succumb to it, and the Governor General would have been an untitled radical, a member of the Anti-Corn-Law League, and most likely a narrow-brimmed Quaker. The sooner this law is recognised, once for all, the better. It is no use kicking against the pricks. As in the middle ages many things were accounted miracles which are now known to be ordinary physical occurrences, so does modern ignorance persist in abusing the action of this great Law of Coincidence, and stupidly calls its manifestations "jobs."

Our Corporation have lately shown their obedience to this great Law, and the silly, ignorant public are furious with them. The newspapers have kept silence, but on the Rialto, in the streets, in clubs and cafés and bar-parlours, the general consensus of opinion is that the Corporation have at once stultified and lowered themselves, and forfeited their claim to public confidence. A contract to the amount of £30,000 has found itself in the hands of R. Neill and Sons. The head of that firm has long been an Alderman, was recently Mayor, and was chairman of the very Committee which gave out the contract. But it was by a roundabout way that the contract finally fell into their hands. Messrs. Neill did not tender, but a firm of the name of Higgins did. Their tender proved to be the lowest, whereupon arose the enquiry—who the deuce is Higgins? The answer was, that for two-thirds of the work Higgins is Neill, Alderman and ex-Mayor. Seeing that the Committee were not joiners and builders, and if they had been, *all* could not have had the contract, the Law of Coincidence compelled them to give it to the firm who would give it to their *confrère*, whose dinners they had eaten, and upon whose future recognition of the Law of Coincidence they could then establish a claim. Who could tell which of them might not fall a victim to this remorseless law? Some one might have unhealthy property which by a Coincidence should not be overlooked. Another, when the Corporation wanted some land might, by Coincidence, find himself in possession of it. A great Law like this must be obeyed, and so Higgins got the contract. As soon as this is settled, Mr. Alderman Neill resigns his gown, and Messrs. Higgins request that the contract may be transferred to Neill & Sons, and the Council, obedient to the Law of Coincidence, grant their request, forego the worthy Alderman's fine of £50, and simmer in a placid self-laudation at having so loyally obeyed one of the great Laws of Human Life.

But the unenlightened public, oblivious of this great Law, and fixing its mind on extraneous and powerless considerations, persist in saying: We do not for a moment doubt that the firm of Neill & Son will execute the contract to the public advantage. On the contrary, we concede that there is no firm in the provinces that could fulfil the engagement more cheaply or in better style. But we do say that so long as the head of that firm was a leading member of the Council, his firm should not have even indirectly been mixed up with Corporate work. He ought to have resigned first and tendered after, and, above all, not sat on the committee that concluded the contract. We consider that we are played fast and loose with. It would not do to resign first, because he might not have got the contract, and then he would have resigned for nothing. But to remain in till he has assisted in giving himself the contract and then to resign, savours more of the canny Scot than of the boasted honour of a Bayard. How can we tell if the other contractors were fairly dealt with; and, to say the least, the whole transaction looks "fishy."

Now, the people who talk in this way might just as well abuse the Corporation because they obey the Law of Gravitation and don't fly. And it is to silence these silly objections, and to restore the Contractors and the Corporation to that position in the public estimation they deserve to occupy, that we have recalled attention to this paramount, but as yet unrecognised, Law.

TOWN TALK,

AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

Now that the Manchester City Council has abandoned its absurd policy of secresy and exclusiveness, and agreed to admit reporters to the meetings of the General Purposes Committee, where the real business of the Corporation is transacted, perhaps it may be induced to abolish the equally absurd regulations for the admission of the public to the Strangers' Gallery. Why should it be necessary to obtain a member's order? The existing system, besides being extremely irksome, is open to abuse in a way we had rather not particularise. Its practical result is a beggarly array of empty benches. Mr. Alderman Rumney, who talks more pragmatical unwisdom than any other man in the municipal chamber, complains that the citizens do not avail themselves of their right of admission to the City Council debates. We shall admit the force of his complaint, and give a hearing to the arguments he founds upon it, as soon as the present ridiculous barriers are removed—not before.

The Rev. John Garrett, D.D., rector of Christ Church, Moss Side, seems to have had a somewhat unusual clerical career. This is his history, as told by himself before a parliamentary committee, and duly printed in a parliamentary Blue Book:—"I am rector of Christ Church, Manchester. Before that I was vicar of St. Paul, near Penzance. Before that I was rector of Biscathorpe, Lincolnshire. Before that I was chaplain of Alton Workhouse, Hampshire. Before that I was chaplain and master of Stroode's Almshouses and Schools, at Egham. Before that I was curate of East Worldham, Hampshire. I was two years curate of St. John's, Waterloo Road. Before that I was curate of Wheatley and Garsington, near Oxford. Before that I was curate of St. Mary and St. Nicholas, Beverley. I was also curate of St. Mark's, Hull; and I was also curate of Aughton-cum-Collingwith, in Yorkshire. I have a great deal of medical knowledge. I have had the privilege of a considerable study of medicine. I have had as many as 60 patients in my own house."

A number of new warehouses and other buildings in the city are rapidly approaching completion, and we should think that offices, rooms, and cellars will soon be more abundant than they have been for some time. These buildings present a strong contrast to the old warehouses and offices in use when the greater part of the business of the town was carried on in Cannon Street. Only a few years back, Dugdale's warehouse with the stone front, half buried in Meal Street, used to be pointed out as one of the handsomest buildings of the kind in Manchester, and Bannerman's warehouse, which really is an imposing building, was considered a wonder. A handsome building has been erected in Brown Street and Marsden Street, for the British Imperial Insurance Company, but both these streets are much too narrow already, and care ought to have been taken to widen them as the old buildings are pulled down. If any of our readers ever happen to be in Water Street, there is a pile of carriers' warehouses just erected there by the London and North-Western Railway Company, which are worth looking at. They show what an imposing effect can be produced by simple means and materials. As a specimen of brick-work, and warehouses erected for the purpose for which they are intended, they seem to be as near perfection as possible.

At the last meeting of our local parliament, some irate councillor fell foul of poor old Knot Mill Fair, and belaboured it with strong and ugly epithets. No doubt there are evils or abuses which ought to be suppressed with a strong and determined hand. For instance, there was the melancholy exhibition of an unfortunate idiot child, whose

cruel treatment was a disgrace to humanity and to the authorities who permitted it. Still, we think the Council should exercise its authority in a restrictive, not a demolishing manner. In any large assemblage of common people, there is of necessity a great amount of grossness and vulgarity. But people must enjoy themselves. Because they happen to be vulgar, that is no reason why they should be deprived of their pleasures; and the pleasures of vulgar people must unavoidably share in the vulgarity of their patrons. So long as they are not immoral, their bad taste must be put up with. "Gawping" at abnormally fat women may not be the highest form of recreation, but it is not a vice; and the class of mind which takes an interest in such exhibitions could not recreate itself at the Peter Street Museum, or kindred instructive and exciting institutions. To be amused at all, it must be vulgarly amused. Moreover, do not let us be too hard upon the common people. Let us bear in mind the throngs of well-dressed ladies whose florins constitute the profits of the Siamese monstrosity, and let us not forget the numbers of the same refined and sensitive caste, who would not wear a green bonnet with a blue dress for the world, yet may be seen any day in the unsavoury court so well presided over by the new-made Baron of Penzance.

Railway companies have a fine sense of humour. Note the spirit in which they have adopted the law with regard to smoking. As everybody knows to his cost, there is a graduated scale which regulates the attention bestowed on the various classes of passengers, from the unfortunate "mungo" who goes by a cheap-and-nasty train, run in opposition to some line of omnibuses, to the *dilletante* traveller by the limited mail, or the heavy swell who indulges in the luxury of a gondola. But their smoking arrangements could hardly be surpassed for an outrageously quaint notion of fun, were even Artemus Ward alive to make the attempt. Keeping generally to the letter of the law, the spirit of it is only faintly insisted on in respect to first-class passengers. In the second-class carriages, smokers smoke with all their old disregard for the comfort of others; whilst in the third—and here is where the laugh comes in—the companies content themselves with sticking the legend "smoking compartment" on one of the doors of a carriage open from end to end; a proceeding which brings to mind the story of the Irishman who went to sleep in a field, and shut the gate to keep the draught out!

The Bulwark of English liberty has been again distinguishing itself. A Mr. Trumble brought an action against the Midland Railway, to recover compensation for an accident. Medical witnesses were "firmly of opinion" that neither the plaintiff's brain nor spine were injured, and that he had, by his own conduct, prevented his recovery. Under these circumstances the jury generously gave him £3,000 of the Railway Company's. The complete equity of this verdict is beyond cavil. If a man has augmented his sufferings, he has so much more suffering to be compensated for. Who pays the compensation is an altogether trivial matter, utterly unworthy of being considered by so great an institution as a bulwark of English liberty. As Chief-Baron Kelly recently remarked, the intelligence of juries in this part of the country is most gratifying.

We notice that some of the articles on literature which we recently alluded to as one of the best features of the *Family Herald* have been republished in a volume, under the title of *Essays on English Writers*. It is rather a forlorn hope to preach to young ladies, but we will venture to recommend this book to them in place of the eternal novel. If they are not yet sick of the three-volume nuisance, they ought to be. Do let them put a little information into their heads, if only for the sake of showing that those articles are not all chignon. But not only to young ladies is this book adapted. To all who take an interest in literature it is a valuable volume. It has this rare good quality—its themes are not ephemeral.

For some time past the game of whipping-top has been pursued with such avidity by the street gamins that the shins and eyes of pedestrians have been in constant danger. Now that the pastime shows some signs of abatement, the still more dangerous game of tip-cat commences. This game is beyond all human endurance. If the police don't put a stop to it, we should recommend all who are annoyed by it to box the ears of every boy found indulging in the sport.

THE CLUBS OF MANCHESTER.

THE UNION.

THE Union is the oldest Club in Manchester. It was founded forty-four years ago. "No great age after all!" exclaims a London reader; and, compared with some Metropolitan Clubs, we must confess that our first-born is only a bantling. Still, walking down Pall Mall, we may claim a respectable place for even the Union, amidst clubs and buildings which have most of them sprung into existence during the present century; while, if London be left out of the question, this parent of Manchester Clubs is absolutely covered with a mantle of antiquity; its sombre grey walls are eloquent with memories of the past; it almost ranks with the Cathedral, the Chetham Hospital, the Optician's Shop in the Market Place, and the few other relics which remain to us of ancient Manchester. Look not sceptical, good reader, but consider! What was Manchester forty-four years ago,—when Broughton and Cheetham Hill, and even Hulme and Chorlton-on-Medlock, existed only in a few isolated houses, and country lanes,—when men made hay, and children gathered flowers, in pleasant meadows, now buried beneath dirty populous streets and huge factories? forty-four years in the history of a people or nation may be only as one night, but in this one night our mushroom of a city has sprung into a Cottonopolis, rivalling Liverpool as the second city in England for size, wealth, and importance, and alas! without any rival at all as regards unhealthiness. The Genius of Steam, and the Cotton Fairy, met one another on the banks of the Irwell, and, lo and behold, in forty-four years, a new centre of commercial life, a new gold mine, the new city of Manchester! If the Union Club be not an antique, at least it is a mediæval, relic.

Our city has been until very lately most unfavourable soil for Clubs. Manchester men live as far out as the omnibus will permit them. They go city-wards for work, homewards for pleasure. There is no "shady side of Pall Mall," no "bay window at White's," no "Rotten Row," or "Lady's Mile," no "West End," in fact, about or within or near the scene of their labours. The "Albany" or "Duke-street" of the Manchester bachelor is at Higher Broughton or Greenheys, and, except it be for Theatre or Concert, Manchester sees him not after six or seven p.m. An hour or so in the middle of the day is, as a general rule, all the time that the man of business has at his disposal for such necessities or relaxations as washing, feeding, smoking and reading. He likes to spend this hour with his wife and children if he possibly can. If he can't, or if he has no such attractions, he spends the hour, and finds all he wants, at the Clarence or the Athenæum. In short, Club-life has never been understood in Manchester, either as a luxury or necessity, until very lately. We say "until very lately," bethinking us of the sudden rise and progress of the Conservative and Reform Clubs, not to speak of the handsome building—the Clarendon—just completed, in St. Peter's Square. Before this "very lately," it was a rare thing indeed for a Manchester man to talk about his Club, *i.e.*, to have a Club to talk about.

Hence the veneration we have had all our life for the Union and its members. We can remember, years ago, when a very little boy, being taken down Mosley Street, and told to look at "the Club." We had no idea what a Club meant, but we gazed and wondered, and thought it was a delightful mystery altogether,—perhaps an Aladdin's Palace inside, or Chamber of Horrors like Madame Tussaud's. It was our fate afterwards, to walk pretty often down the street, and, as often, did we gaze up at those windows, and wonder what was inside. Sometimes we saw a grave looking gentleman mount the steps and pass through the front door. We always stood entranced until he disappeared. Sometimes a head or even two would be visible at one of the lower windows; and on one happy occasion, the window itself was partly open, and we could see the opposite chimney-piece quite distinctly. The Union remained a mystery to us—a very Sphinx,—and we would have given all our marbles and our best bat to have walked inside. Years rolled on. We gradually laid aside childish fancies. Nevertheless, the Union fascinated us still. It was an unknown and inaccessible territory, more wonderful than Chatsworth or Buckingham Palace, inasmuch as these latter were open to the public at stated times, but the door of the Union opened to us never.

One morn a Peri at the gate
Of Eden stood disconsolate.

So, on more than one "morn," did we stand, even when grown up, and of age to have known better, and gaze, as in boyish days, and with the same old boyish wonder, at the many-windowed smoke-begrimed front of this our Manchester Eden. "Many-windowed" is no hyperbolical figure of speech. There are twenty windows on the Mosley Street side, and twenty-seven more looking out on Nicholas Street, with not the tiniest bit of ornament or variety about any one of the whole forty-seven. Two flag-staffs, and four lamps, complete the external decorations. But in our eyes the very nakedness of the building was only another and more mysterious charm. Fancy pictured gorgeous suites of rooms within, even, as in the old fairy tale of Beauty and the Beast, the latter's rough hide conceals the beautiful countenance and dress of the young Prince whom Beauty has unknowingly loved and married.

Meanwhile, if we saw but little, we heard the more. Strange tales, where and by whom first told, none knew, found their way into the outer world, and into our eager ears. We heard how fiercely the members gathered together to black-ball their kinsfolk and acquaintance who fain would have entered in,—how wealth and dignity availed not,—how interest and any amount of special pleading were tried in vain. We listened "with 'bated breath" to a tale almost too sad and strange for truth, and yet "ower true,"—a tale which made our hair stand straight on end,—to the effect that even a civic dignitary, a mayor, a knight to boot, had been rejected,—rejected once and again,—rejected even while clad in the imperial purple—the civic robe of office! Money, rank, title, influence,—all were of no account in the ballot-box of the Union. And after we had heard this tale, we grew so frightened of the Club and all that appertained to it, that we carefully crossed over, and walked on the opposite side of the street, for fear lest the very pavement belonging to the building should rise up against the contact of our feet plebeian. By-and-bye, too, came other rumours. People said that the black-balling system was being carried to such an extent that only could no one get in, but that no one would try. People said that the numbers were falling off. People said the Union would come to grief, and some of the rejected outcasts, smarting still under the black-balls, were observed to brighten up wonderfully at the idea. Then, all of a sudden, as if to confirm the two first of these rumours, it oozed out that the Club Committee had altered the entrance-fee and annual subscription, lowering the former by 15 guineas, and increasing the latter by three for the first five years,—a most ingenious device, whereby the new members paid just as much as the old ones, in five years' time, while seeming somehow to pay less. The number of members was also increased (on paper) from 400 to 450. And—rumours further added,—there was a private, unrecorded, but perfectly understood arrangement come to, among the members, that the *pilling* should not be quite so heavy as before;—at any rate, we have heard of no disappointed suitors of late, and we believe the fifty additional places are not filled yet.

Favoured by fortune, we paid a visit to the Club, the other day. It was strange to find ourselves passing through the well-known door, and into the room, through the windows of which we had tried to gaze so often. Remembering our boyish fancies, we smiled as we tried in vain to find some resemblance in wall or ceiling, furniture or floor, to the fairy pictures we used to conjure up. There is no glitter, or over-plus of ornament about the Union. Indeed, if the funds of the Club allow of such an expense, we should suggest that the whole building, especially the Hall and passages, might be re-painted, and in brighter colours, with great advantage. We also wonder how it comes to pass that no member has taken pity on the bare walls, and presented a picture, portrait, or engraving, to enliven them. Unless our memory deceives us greatly there is not a single decoration of this kind throughout the building. A little more ornament, light, and colour, and the very excellent suite of rooms would be perfection. As it is, they are a trifle too heavy and sombre. They are spacious, lofty, and apparently well warmed and ventilated. The furniture is solid and good throughout. "Nothing for show: all for comfort and use," appears to be the motto of the Union. We somehow fancy that, like the Senior United Service Club, in London, it is more suited for old than young. There is a quiet staid solemnity about the place, which must harmonize exactly with an attentive perusal of the paper, a quiet chat, a deliberately discussed dinner and bottle of wine, a meditative smoke, a cosy snooze, a deeply studied rubber,—with anything and everything except noise and racket and much moving about. To judge from the list of members, most of them are, at any rate, middle-aged: some decidedly in the sere and yellow leaf. There are still a few of the original members left. Many of the names are familiar to us, and we notice with awe no less than eighteen members of parliament, among them the Hon. Algernon Egerton and our well-beloved Thomas Bazley. The Club has evidently no political bias. Not only may Bazley and Egerton meet in the reading-room, but Sir Elkanah Armitage and the ever ubiquitious William Romaine Callender, junior, may, just as likely as not, dine at the same table, and dip into the same salt-cellar. Need we say that *all* the names are eminently and highly respectable?

Now for a short topographical sketch:—On the right of the door-way, the reading-room, with London and local papers, two windows looking out on Mosley-street, and three more towards the Royal Institution. Behind this, the Lavatory. Let us give unqualified praise. The arrangements are perfect, even down to the little drawer which is set apart for each member's private and sole use. On the other side of the Entrance Hall, a small room, apparently intended for writing letters in. Then, on the same side, the Dining Room,—large, lofty, lighted from above, and painted in Pompeian fashion. The tables are laid for dinner; the cold meats, salads, and pickles are temptingly arranged upon the dumb waiters. The living waiters glide about, in sober but handsome liveries, while the head-waiter, or butler, superintends, in dignity like unto a Bishop. "Our Club is second to none out of London, sir," he informs us, and indeed we can quite believe him. The Union, it appears, has a capital cellar of wine.

So much for the ground floor. Upstairs, we are taken through two private dining rooms, one with three windows, and the other with two, looking over Mosley Street. These rooms have a dreary unused appearance, and we are glad to escape from them into the Library, which is situated over the Reading-room, and is, we should think, about the same size. It is the pleasantest room we have been shown into yet, if for no other reason, because the walls are furnished as well as the floor. We have no time to examine the works; but they appear to be well chosen and bound. Behind the Library, a little room, where, we are told, breakfast is laid for any gentleman who has been sleeping in the house. Behind this, a Card-room. Further back again, the Smoking-room, a somewhat comfortless, vaulted apartment, but with a very cosy little recess, or inner-room, at one end. Finally, beyond the Smoking-room, its inseparable Club-companion, the Billiard-room. This last, our conductor informs us, is always well patronized, and no wonder, for it is a fine room, particularly lofty, with two tables, and abundance of space and sofas for lookers on. There is still a story we have not seen. "Four Bed-rooms, sir, for members who choose to stay all night." And, we presume, servants' apartments. Then the roof and flag-staffs.

For the information of such gentlemen as intend to offer themselves for election, we may remark that the entrance money is twenty-five guineas; the annual subscription ten guineas for the first five years, and seven guineas afterwards.

MORNING-AFTER APHORISMS OF MY LATE HUSBAND.

By Madame Jumentoris.

THERE is no statute of limitations for the man who goes home *half* drunk.

The softest tavern cushion is often stuffed with thorns.

It is better to anticipate the supper beer than to go home with the milk in the morning.

The barometer at 3 a.m. always points to stormy.

Knocking yourself up generally ends in having to knock up your wife.

A little latchkey is a dangerous thing.

The stealthiest foot forgets the creaking stair.

The greatest coward does not always go away first.

A long vigil makes a short temper.

"A soft answer turneth away wrath:" a defiant humour but postponeth the curtain lecture.

THE SILVER TEAPOTS.

THERE are symptoms of the return of the testimonial mania, and we would like to say a word about it before the epidemic sets in with its accustomed severity. Let us, however, protect ourselves against any supposition of disrespect to or even disregard of the amiable gentleman whose name has this week been brought—much against his own will we have no doubt—before his fellow-citizens as the subject of a testimonial. Mr. Rickards has laboured in a not very attractive field of public usefulness for many years; his perseverance has been unusual; his temper has seldom failed; his good feeling and kindness of heart never. Of the character of his services we cannot speak with knowledge, and therefore we prefer not to speak at all; but, having been Chairman of the Guardians for twenty years and more, those services must have merited some eulogy, for they have been exposed during all that time as well to the criticisms of the public of Manchester and the individual Guardians as to those of the central authorities at Whitehall; and, in the main, we believe we are justified in saying that Mr. Rickards has passed the ordeal with a signal absence of anything like discord. This gentleman resigned his office quietly the other day, and would have been content to remain at peace with his own conscience as a man who had worked perseveringly, and, above all, gratuitously, for the public. He doubtless congratulated himself that, at all events, he would have the satisfaction of escaping the martyrdom of the Ancient Teapots. He reckoned without his host. His tranquil lapse into private life was watched with an envy that could only be appeased by handing out the teapots. And out they are. They are on the rampage, and we must let them drive. But with the sleet of teapotism and the scud of testimonialism beating upon us, we still must remonstrate.

It appears that the distinction of *not* receiving a testimonial cannot be accorded to Mr. Rickards. He might have so been honoured, but Lord Melbourne's maxim, "Why can't you leave it alone?" will not go down in Manchester at present. After twenty years' voluntary labour, the sweeter, perhaps, to Mr. Rickards because it was voluntary, we come down to the money-bag after all. We cannot keep the obstreperous pound sterling out of the transaction. When we thought we were amateurs we erred, and were deceived. The shop-walker, with big gold seals, and clinking coinage in his breeches pocket, rattles up, and the plague of the cash-box is over it all. Probably the promoters of this mode of recognising civic merit do not see the coarseness of their expedient. Of their wish to do the right thing we entertain no shadow of doubt. Then why could they not keep the money business in the rear. By all means a testimonial, but let it be, for once, *uncommon*. Do as the civil servants did the other day with Mr. Monk, the member for Gloucester—give him a numerously signed address, and present it in an enduring form, enclosed, if you like, in a casket more remarkable for its shape than for its mere value. In that form you get the names of men whom you value and who value you, and they mean something. They are a species of suffrage—each name implies a "well done" to the recipient, and the weight of the name is not measured simply by the amount of money appended to it. The mere fact of the testimonial not taking the form of a piece of silver or of gold does not do away with our objection to pecuniary recognition of services of this kind, which were intended to be gratuitous from the beginning, and which, in our view, appear to be sullied when touched—even with the best intentions—by Mammon. Such a course gives the gentleman no chance against the schemer who goes gratuitously into a service for which he knows the testimonial mania will compensate him ultimately, and who thus, by a serene device, gets all the credit of disinterestedness, and all the plunder of the other thing. By judicious bottle-holding, and a careful nursing of chances, and a persevering punctuality and persistency in a given arm-chair at a given moment, a man may, upon the present system, as certainly compass a testimonial as he may colour his meerschaum or his nose.

We very much require a modulation of this system, and, at all events, more appropriateness in it. We have no right to regard the receiver of a testimonial as a mere passive recipient; his feelings ought to be consulted, and, if they be not consulted, the gift—whatever it may be—is inappropriate, if it be not even insulting. There is a vast gradation in testimonials; they range from the simple barrel of oysters to the imperial gifts of Blenheim or Strathfieldsaye; the main thing is that they should be appropriate, and in Mr. Rickards' case we feel a very strong desire that this should be so. We cannot deal out to him the same measure of gushing effusion which leads admiring girls to decorate with a new cassock the manly breast of a bright-eyed curate, nor ought we laboriously to maul his reputation with vessels of gold or of silver. It is quite a providential circumstance that Mr. Rickards' lineaments are already preserved for us by the hand of a master, or his portrait might have been tarred with the same stick which has stricken down a neighbouring prince. The resources of an animated bust, of a scholarship in a college, of an endowment for an infirmary or hospital ward, are open to us. Of the two last it would seem, at the first blush, rather dangerous to speak disparagingly, but they appear to us, at all events, open to the money objection. If possible we would like to eliminate the obtrusive purses of the well-to-do burghers from this project. If Mr. Rickards has saved our rates and yet relieved our poor, as he appears to have done, with some considerable success, do let us avoid offering him, in any shape whatever, a commission upon the sums total as his reward.

THE AMATEUR ACTORS AT THE ATHENÆUM.

WHATEVER the verdict as to the excellencies or defects of the performances of the Manchester Athenæum Literary and Dramatic Reading Society, there can be no question as to their popularity. Causes apart from the intrinsic merit of the entertainment may partially account for this. Individuals no doubt exist to whose peculiarly vivid imaginations a dramatic performance loses much of its objectionableness by being presented off the boards of a regular theatre. Certain it is, that on the occasion of these entertainments, those are seen in the Gymnasium of the Athenæum (for the nonce dignified into the Large Hall) whom one would not expect to meet at the Royal or Prince's Theatre. Long before the time for opening the doors, charmingly attired ladies might be seen hurrying along business streets, to the undisguised astonishment and admiration of lazy loungers on the warehouse steps, to the George Street entrance of the Institution, with a pleasantly fussy and important air. Before the opening of the door, the tiresomely numerous steps became crowded, to the dismay and final discomfiture of an unhappy venturous youth, with a large basket, who, without assignable cause, tried to force his way to the top, and ignominiously failed. With the opening of the doors the spiral procession begins its slow ascent, and drags its slow length along to the scene of action. A very pleasant view have the earlier comers of many sweet faces beneath them, and ample opportunity is given them, by their elevation, to study elaborate coiffures and charming hats or bonnets, of which last articles of attraction it may be refreshing to some readers to chronicle that the prevailing colour was blue. In the large hall, the usual furniture—ladders and other gymnastic instruments—is decently hidden away, and the platform converted into a stage. The seats are singularly well adapted to excite the wrath of their occupants. They are forms, for the most part uncushioned, and placed so close together that the comfortable disposal of one's knees is a physical impossibility, and to pass people who are seated is the cruellest torture. On the whole, we should, if compelled to choose, prefer the pit of the Theatre Royal. The room was speedily filled to a disagreeable extent. We cannot help thinking that the present method of issuing tickets is too liberal. Surely some little attention ought to be paid to the capacity of the room. With much chat, not a little flirting, and a general flutter of expectation, the time passes till seven o'clock. Then, with a slightly sensational tinkle of a bell, the green curtain is pushed aside to disclose the drop scene, and the band breaks into strains which by courtesy may be called melody. A very shrill instrument distinguished itself greatly all evening.

The quality of most amateur acting is sufficiently well known. To enthusiastic sisters and sweethearts it may be interesting and pleasant enough, but to impartial critics it is generally more ludicrous than agreeable. An overwhelming difficulty seems to be experienced in speaking loudly enough to be heard half a dozen yards from the stage. Everybody is ill at ease, the prompter worked to death, and the pro-

prieties broken with unscrupulous unanimity. In these fundamental points the Athenæum actors are altogether superior to average amateurs. Each appears calm, and speaks his part without perturbation, and with a distinctness which makes every word intelligible. Scenery and properties generally, in such entertainments, are only noticeable for their absurdity, and for the steady persistence with which they will keep on doing things which are not expected of them, and not particularly desired. There is nothing striking in the scenery at the Athenæum. The resources of the stage never offered convenience for more than two people to be seated at the same time. But everything worked with a regularity and promptness which, under the circumstances, were not a little remarkable. There is something in the choice of pieces for representation which points out that the ambition of the Society is by no means so small as its platform. At the former performance this season, *The Poor Gentleman* was played, and last week Sheridan's *Rivals*. No little courage must be necessary to aim so high; and there is a considerable disadvantage in choosing pieces which, to Manchester playgoers, are inseparably connected with the appearances of the Haymarket Company. It is almost an inevitable consequence of the circumstances that charges of plagiarism and imitation should be brought against any actors who produce these old English comedies. If the charge of imitation, which is sometimes brought against the Athenæum Society, were literally true, it would not be either a crime or a disgrace. Higher models could not on most points be studied and copied than the Haymarket Company, and a good imitation of such models would not be discreditable to many professional actors. But we altogether doubt the correctness of the accusation. A very considerable amount of similarity is inevitable in the performance of the same play by any two companies. Such performances must, to a certain extent, give the impression of imitation. There is a family resemblance, founded on tradition, between every theatrical representation of any given piece; and nothing further than this can be honestly averred of the acting at the Athenæum. This charge of imitation is especially brought, and probably with least accuracy, against the leading low comedian of the company. Taking as examples the characters of Dr. Ollapod, in the *Poor Gentleman*, and Fighting Bob Acres, in the *Rivals*, we find it impossible to imagine how anyone who has seen both Mr. Cavanah and Mr. Compton can discern this closeness of imitation. Any near resemblance between the performances of two gentlemen who are so entirely contrasted in face and figure would be difficult to picture. And, apart from this, the points which especially distinguish Compton's acting, and make him the great comedian he is, are precisely those features in the acting which are altogether inimitable. It is, of course, quite possible to be a clever amateur comedian, without being a Compton. There is one important particular in which Mr. Compton is improved by Mr. Cavanah. He does not attempt to make points, and raise an occasional laugh, by giving undue prominence to sentences which are suggestive—often something more than suggestive—of unpleasant coarseness. It might be a dangerous experiment for any less privileged actor to attempt imitation in this particular. The way in which Mr. Cavanah avoided the grossness of Dr. Ollapod's speech, after the betrothal scene in the *Poor Gentleman*, which Compton drags into such disgusting prominence, was admirable. This remark equally applies to all the amateur actors. They feel the compunction natural to gentlemen at having to speak words suggestive of anything like impurity, and show that they feel it. Instead of rejoicing in a double *entendre*, as almost every member of the Haymarket Company does, they hurry over and, as far as circumstances allow, shirk such doubtful points, and, instead of showing pleasure, they share the discomfort of their audience during their delivery.

We may, perhaps, venture on a short description and criticism of the last performance—the *Rivals*. It was almost to be expected that Sir Anthony Absolute would not be the strongest character in the cast. It is certainly an undesirable thing for a young amateur to be put side by side with the finest representative of old men on the English stage, or to have his conception of the character compared with the most admirable and finished study of Mr. Chippendale. Mr. Scholes did not in the least look the character. If actors are not prepared to sacrifice their whiskers to the exigencies of the stage, it is at least to be expected that, for the sake of consistency, they will, when necessary, take all the more care to conceal the juvenility of these appendages. It was impossible to imagine Sir Anthony with such whiskers. It is hard to think that Mr. Lynill imagined that Captain Absolute derived his title from his rank in the navy. Yet, how to account for his walk and gait generally, which distinctly partook of the nautical roll of a sailor more accustomed to tread the quarter deck than the drawing room, on any other hypothesis we do not quite see. Should the supposition as to Mr. Lynill's conception of the character be incorrect, we must put the responsibility of the peculiarity we have noted on his clothes or his tailor. Falkland made himself so utterly miserable with his extraordinary power of acute self-torture, that no one would have been surprised at his seeking relief in a flood of tears. He was so completely and causelessly wretched that it was hard to avoid laughing at him. We have already spoken of Acres. It was a careful, clever, and amusing performance. The brogue of Sir Lucius O'Trigger would have done credit to the veriest bog-peasant in the Emerald Isle. Indeed, it rather overburdened the character—was almost too Irish. So much care was taken with it, and so laboriously was it worked out, that little time or scope was left for the display of Irish energy and liveliness. Fag was admirably taken; no one would have hinted that the character had been entrusted to a supernumerary. Whilst it is not quite certain that those who were unaware that David was a great assumption of Keeley's, would have suspected the possibility of such a thing from studying the character at the Athenæum. It is beyond our purpose to criticise the ladies. Little criticism is needed. Every female part was admirably taken. To their grace and ease much of the smoothness and success of the entertainment was due.

The performance concluded with the farce, *Friend Waggles*. We think the farce was a mistake. Most of the spectators had been in the room for nearly four hours—a room overpoweringly hot, and with seats wonderfully hard, and therefore not much in the humour for the broad fun, the ludicrous plot, and the wildly-silly dialogue of a farce. The selection of the farce was a further mistake. It was much too Haymarketish. The tone was throughout disagreeably tinged. There was little to find fault with in the acting, which was in every part passable. But that a piece, of which the whole (so-called) fun turns on mistakes about other men's wives, and other men's wives' bedrooms, did not excite unusual laughter, reflected credit on the silent part of the audience.

THE HURT GOLD-DIGGER IN HIS TENT.

Thrice to stern winter's drenching rains a prey,
Thrice scorched by summer's fiercer noontide ray,—
Bleach'd by the sun, and tatter'd by the storm,
Lo, where yon tent erects its ill-patched form.

Within those walls, beneath that pervious roof,
Which scarce may keep the prying stars aloof,
Gaunt-visaged poverty holds threadbare state,
Grief, squalor, sickness, in attendance wait;
Hope has departed, to return no more,
And—like a hound leash'd-in—death crouches at the door.

Stretch'd on a rugged pallet, there he lies,
With pallid brow, flush'd cheek, lack-lustre eyes,
Alone—save with his thoughts!—and, o'er his breast,
His cross-laid hands in prayerful token rest.
Anon, he casts a languid glance around,
Only to sicken with disgust profound;
From roof to floor, each object vies to tell
The sorry tale of wretchedness too well:
The smoke-stained rafters, rotting to decay,
Whence the bloat spider hovers o'er his prey;
The tottering relics of an ill-swung door,
Conscious of leathern hinge or latch no more;
The unwashed hearth, a rude mis-shapen mound,
Foul refuge of each noisome pest around;
And, midst of all, a rough-hewn squalid board,
Alas! with no accustom'd dainties stored,
But (pregnant of a cruel truth!) o'erspread
With shrivell'd fragments of untasteful bread.

O mother, for one heavenly hour of thee—
Thy voice, look, touch, and sacred ministry;
Oh that *her* yearn'd-for form were bending nigh,
To smooth the pillow, close the filial eye:
Oh that *his* equal voice were sounding near,
That makes best music to a brother's ear,
And ever to the wounded spirit brings
Comfort, and hope, and courage on its wings.

Christmas Day, 1854.

THE QUEEN AND THE AUTHORS.

THE correspondent of a New York paper gives a brief account of the recent interview between Her Majesty and some leading men of letters in London. He says:

The Queen sent word to DEAN STANLEY that she wished to pay him a visit at the Deanery, Westminster Abbey, and would be glad to have certain gentlemen eminent in literature to meet her. She named Mr. GROTE, (the historian, and author of *Plato*,) Mr. CARLYLE, Mr. BROWNING, and one or two others. These favored persons—or was it the Queen who must be considered favored?—were, I hear, greatly pleased with the interview which they had with Her Majesty. She paid a compliment, in all sincerity to, each. She had read Mr. GROTE'S *Plato*, and expressed her admiration for it. This will be gratifying to a public writer not unknown to New York, who has called Mr. GROTE'S *Plato* the greatest book of the age. The Queen showed that she was familiarly acquainted with Mr. BROWNING'S poems, and spoke to him relative to his work now in course of publication, the *Ring and the Book*. She conversed for some little time with Mr. CARLYLE, and the subject of pauperism happened to arise. Mr. CARLYLE avowed his opinion that there was very little unavoidable and involuntary pauperism in England. Her Majesty said that she was afraid he was mistaken—that unhappily there was too much evidence of widespread pauperism, produced by misfortune, to admit of any doubt of its existence. The party, I am informed, (all this was told to me "privately," but there is no harm in repeating it to you in confidence,) had a most interesting conversation, and everybody was delighted with the Queen's urbanity.

THE RULING PASSION.—At the beginning of the century there was a whist club in a country town of Somersetshire, composed mostly of clergymen, that met every Sunday evening in the back parlour of a barber. Four of these were acting as pall-bearers at the funeral of a reverend brother, when a delay occured from the grave not being ready or some other cause; and the coffin was set down in the chancel. By way of whiling away the time, one of them produced a pack of cards from his pocket, and proposed a rubber. The rest gladly assented, and they were deep in their game, using the coffin as their table, when the sexton came to announce that the preparations were complete.

VULGARITY.—Vulgarity is as good as an income. For see what advantages a vulgar man has. He can push his fortunes without even knowing that he is pushing them. He can ask and refuse, and haggle and barter, and do any disagreeable or dirty work, without exhausting himself by it. In dealing with the world, he is in his true element. He flatters heartily, without knowing that his flattery is an impertinence. For himself, he can swallow praise like a pig its provender; and no want of refinement prevents him from enjoying the coarsest entertainment. Parents who care for the material success and for the rude happiness of their children, should pray that they may be sufficiently vulgar, and should always give them a good example in that respect.—*Arthur Helps.*

EDMUND KEAN'S DEBUT IN LONDON.

AT Drury Lane nothing had for a long time succeeded till, on the 20th of January, 1814, a little shabby man with fine eyes—a new recruit from Exeter—appeared as Shylock. He was a poor slighted actor, one Edmund Kean, who only a few weeks before, had entered Dorchester foot-sore and hungry, carrying on his back his eldest child, who was dying of whooping-cough. He had been playing melodramatic parts, and harlequins and savages, through Devonshire and Dorsetshire, and at Dorchester had been lucky enough to catch the eye of Mr. Arnold, the Drury Lane manager, who had engaged "the great little man with the fine Italian face," for a term of three years, at a salary rising to ten pounds a week. "My God," he said, burning with ambition and brandy, for he already drank hard, "If I should succeed now, I think it will drive me mad." A few nights after, his child died; he drenched himself with brandy, then, throwing himself on the corpse, covered it with kisses, and swore he would awake it from the dead. This child (Howard) had acted with him at Teignmouth in *Pizarro* and *Chiron and Achilles*. At the time of his Drury Lane engagement, Kean was all but starving in his lodgings at No. 21, Cecil Street, Strand. He had come up to town with borrowed money, and he had not paid his rent for two whole months;-but the good old maid, his landlady, was merciful to the eccentric debtor, and, contrary to Mrs Siddons, who had said, "there is too little of him to do anything," prophesied his success to his believing wife: "There is something about Mr. Kean, ma'am," she said, "which tells me he will be a great man." *Richard the Third* was to have been the opening play, but Kean was afraid of his stunted stature being unfavourably contrasted with the heroic figure of John Kemble; and he had therefore said, "Shylock, or nothing!" The actors, at the rehearsal, disliked his innovations; and Raymond, the stage-manager, predicted his failure. As a class, actors and stage-managers are liberal in such predictions, and do not believe much in unrecognised genius. Fuseli used to eat pork that he might dream of devils; Dryden took surges before writing an ode; Mossop had peculiar dishes for every character—roast pig for tyrants, steaks before *Measure for Measure*, boiled mutton for *Romeo*, and pudding for *Tancred*. Kean, so well inured to fasts, fortified himself for once with good beefsteak and stout; then tied up his wig, collar, black silk stockings, and red hat in a pocket-handkerchief, thrust them into the pocket of a drab coat with great capes, and saying he only wished he was going to be shot, trudged through the snow, on a cold, dismal, foreboding evening, to the bright noisy theatre. There was a scanty but an appreciative audience. Kean's generous friend and patron, Dr. Drury, of Harrow (Byron's master), was there, and saw, the moment Kean took his position and leaned upon his cane, by his quick, flashing eye, and resolute *staccato* manner—sinister, vigilant, hard and revengeful—that he meant to do or die: it was Cæsar, or nothing. The first scene went flat. In the third act, with Tubal, however, he triumphed; and the trial-scene brought down the house in glorious thunder. "That day," says Mr. Procter, "he overcame the Nervii." Pope and Powell followed Kean to the humble dressing-room which he shared with two or three others, and uttered these delicious words: "You have made a hit to-night, sir." "You have done wonders, sir; you have saved the theatre." Arnold, the manager, moreover, sent for Kean, and said, "You have exceeded our expectations, sir. This play will be repeated next Wednesday." In the meantime, two kind fellow-lodgers at No. 21, Cecil Street, had hurried back to tell Kean's anxious, half-desparing wife of his triumph. Presently upstairs raced Kean, wild with joy. "Mary," he cried, "my fortune's made. Now you shall ride in your carriage." Then he took Charles out of his cradle, kissed him, and exclaimed, "Now, my boy, you shall go to Eton;" then he gave a deep sigh, and said, "O that Howard was alive now! but he is better where he is." The happy couple sat up all night castle-building. On the second night of Shylock, £325 was taken at the doors. The public already felt a great dramatic genius had arisen to fill the vacant throne of Garrick. After the third performance, Whitbread tore up the first contract and offered Kean £20 a week. After six Shylock-nights, he essayed Richard the Third, terribly afraid of a failure. It was, however, a great success. His Richard was not princely, but it was satanic and terrible. The point in the death-scene, where with savage impotence he strikes at his adversary after his own sword has broken, Kean copied from the death of an officer in Spain. Being pure nature, it was of course thought by the more superfine critics to be vulgar, and wanting in dignity. The fourth night Kean played Richard, the doorkeepers took £600; the first night he played Hamlet, £660. "I hear he is an admirable Harlequin," said an envious actor. "That I am certain of," replied radiant, generous Jack Bannister; "for already he has leaped over all our heads." —*Walter Thornbury.*

YANKEEISMS.

A Memphis jury, having found a man guilty of murdering a citizen who is alive and well, are deliberating whether to rescind their verdict or let the convicted man kill the citizen.

The sentence of the burlesque actor, Hernandez, in Omaha, was this. "For shooting his wife, fourteen years; for shooting Harry Rainforth, seven years; for shooting the policeman, thirty days."

The following notice has recently been removed from a bridge in Athens, Georgia:—"Notice-Twenty-five dollars fine for driving over this bridge faster than a walk. If a negro, twenty-five lashes on the bare back. N. B.—Half the above reward will be given to the informant."

A parrot belonging to some friends of mine was generally taken out of the room when the family assembled for prayers, for fear lest he might join irreverently in the responses. One evening, however, his presence happened to be unnoticed, and for some time, he maintained a decorous silence; but, at length, instead of "Amen!" out he came with "Cheer, boys, cheer!" On this the butler was directed to remove him, and had got as fas as the door, when the bird, perhaps thinking that he had committed himself, and had better apologize, called out, "Sorry I spoke! * * The parrot of a relation of mine also used, whenever he dropped anything he was eating, to say, "Pick up Bobby's crust;" being doubtless prompted by the same train of associations as those which led another parrot, which I knew well, invariably to say "Thank you!" whenever anything is given to him. Some parrot-fanciers had agreed to meet in a year's time, when each was to show a bird for a prize—proficiency in talking to be the great criterion of merit. On the day appointed, all the rest came, each duly bringing his parrot. One only appeared without his, saying that he was such a stupid bird he was quite ashamed to bring him. This excuse was held to be inadmissible, and his master accordingly went off for and returned with him. No sooner was he introduced than, looking round at the large assembly of birds, he exclaimed, "My eye! what a lot of parrots!" The prize was immediately voted to him.

A CHILD'S SONG.

Which is the Wind that brings the cold?
The North Wind, Freddy, and all the snow;
And the sheep will scamper into the fold
When the North begins to blow.

Which is the Wind that brings the heat?
The South Wind, Katy; and corn will grow,
And peaches redden for you to eat,
When the South begins to blow.

Which is the Wind that brings the rain?
The East Wind, Arty; and farmers know
That cows come shivering up the lane
When the East begins to blow.

Which is the Wind that brings the flowers?
The West Wind, Bessy; and soft and low
The birdies sing in the Summer hours
When the West begins to blow.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

[The following list of books, published during the last week or ten days, does not comprise works of a technical, sectional, or merely professional character.]

	Published at. s. d.
Baxter (R. D.), the Taxation of the United Kingdom	4 6
Browning (E. B.), a Selection from the Poetry of..	10 6
Browning (R.), Selections from the Poetical Works of	5 0
Carlyle (T.), the French Revolution, a History, vol. 3..	9 0
Carlyle (T.), History of Friedrich the Second, vols. 5, 6, and 7	21 0
Count Teleki, a Story of Modern Jewish Life ..	9 0
De Rothschild (C.), The Fundamental Truths of Judaism	2 6
Dodd (G.), Dictionary of Manufactures..	5 0
Figuier (L.), The Insect World, translated by Janon	16 0
Figuier (L.), The Ocean World; or, The Sea and its Living Inhabitants	16 0
French (G. R.), Shakspeareana Genealogies.. ..	15 0
Good Society, a Complete Manual of Manners ..	5 0
Grant (J.), The Girl He Married, 3 vols..	31 6
Hauff (W.), Three Tales from the German, by Faber	2 0
Howard (G., Earl of Carlisle), Poems	6 0
Lever (C.), That Boy of Norcott's	12 0
Peasant Life, Sketches of the Villagers in Glenaldie	9 0
Plato's Apology and Crito, with Notes by Wagner	4 6
Robinson (F. W.), For Her Sake, 3 vols.	31 6
Sacristan's (The) Household, by Author of Aunt Margaret's Troubles, 2 vols.	21 0
Taylor (B.), Views Afoot, or Europe seen with Knapsack and Staff	1 6
Thynne (Lady C), Adventures of Mrs. Hardcastle, 3 vols.	31 6
Uhland's Poems, translated by W. C. Sandars ..	5 0

Concord presents the "champion accidentalist" in a man who has already broken one arm, one leg, four ribs, his collar bone, and lost the sight of one eye, by accidents.

Mr. Macready is in very bad health. He has in fact completely broken down, and his condition excites considerable anxiety. He has just entered his 77th year, and is in sore trouble at the dangerous illness of his only daughter, who is returning from Madeira no better than when she went there.

THE CANNY SCOT.—M. Guizot was walking in the park of Haddo House with Lord Aberdeen. All at once the English statesman stopped him before a cottage of very modest appearance. "There," said he, "is a small house, which recalls to my mind a great shame of my political life." "An act of violence?" asked M. Guizot. "Judge you—I had there a cottager, a fine fellow, but horribly annoying, who in every election conflict never lost the opportunity of opposing me." "Did you turn him out?" "No; but I reduced his rent by one guinea." Thus diminished, the small farmer was no longer an elector, and could no more annoy the noble Lord.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

A. N.—We have not seen the book, but will endeavour to ascertain.

A correspondent calls our attention to an error in the article on the Rev. W. Herford and the Brook Street Unitarian Chapel. The inscription on the memorial to the late George William Wood, M.P., states that he was "In politics, a Whig of the school of Charles James Fox," not of William Pitt, as we inadvertently stated.

RECEIVED.—"R. N. S.," "A Christian," "Outsider."

Communications should be addressed to the Editor, *Sphinx* Office, 37, Oxford Street, Manchester. Every manuscript should bear the name and address of the sender. All contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage. No replies or MSS. can be delivered on personal application.

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CONTENTS OF No. 35, APRIL 10.

Our Social Sketch-Book: Widows.
A Study of Tennyson.
A Day after the Fair.
Advice to Housewives.
The Lay of the Law-Student.
Reminiscences of the Stage in Manchester. VII. James Browne; Marie Wilton.
Crossing Swords with H.M. Inniskillings. II. The Close.
A Seance with the Progressive Spiritualists.
TOWN TALK.—The New M.P. for Salford, Mr. Charley; City Clocks; Metropolitan Dramatic Criticism; Gaiety Theatre; Pantomime at the Prince's Theatre; Discussion on "The Existence of Deity."
MISCELLANIES.—Whist and Whist Players; Roberts's Largest Breaks; Wise Saws; Handel in a Rage.

CONTENTS OF No. 34, APRIL 3.

The Blind Asylum Chapel.
Holiday Notes: Wastdale.
After Dark.
Crossing Swords with H.M.S. Inniskillings: 1. The Opening.
A Morning with the Unitarians: The Rev. W. Herford.
Good Friday on the Bowdon Line.
A New Expedition to the Polar Seas.
The Bank Clerk to his Bicycle.
TOWN TALK.—The Crossing-Sweep Nuisance; Newsrooms in Manchester: St. Ann's Street; The Velocipede Mania; Over-estimate of Universities; London *v.* Provincial Dramatic Cities; The Author of the Alhambra Article; Hissing in Theatres; Girl of the Period Literature; Our New M.P.'s at Home.
MISCELLANIES.—A Reminiscence of Mr. Buckstone's Playhouse; Two Epitaphs; More Notes from Froude's Address; The Manchester Grammar School; Something Like a Theatre; American Tourists; The Later Days of Edmund Kean, &c., &c.

CONTENTS OF No. 33; MARCH 27.

Reminiscences of the Stage in Manchester: VI. Actors and Managers.
The American Snob.
Song: St. Patrick's Day.
On the Rialto: The Preston Strike.
The Clubs of Manchester: The Conservative.
New Lancashire M.P.'s in Parliament.
Sunday Evening with the Secularists.
TOWN TALK.—Future Dramatic Events in Manchester; Crossing-Sweepers in Manchester; Breaches of Promise of Marriage; Growth of the City; The *Times* Foreign Correspondents; The London Alhambra; Juries and Railway Compensation; "Sport" in India; Improper Photographs.
MISCELLANIES.—Manchester Artists in London; The Manchester Grammar School; Notes from Froude's Address; "Homes" of the Poor in Manchester.

The numbers comprising the First Volume (1 to 52) are no longer obtainable separately. A few copies of parts 1, 2, and 3 (containing the numbers from 1 to 52), and price elevenpence, fivepence, and ninepence respectively, may be obtained from the publishers, Messrs. J. G. KERSHAW & Co., 37, Oxford Street, Manchester.

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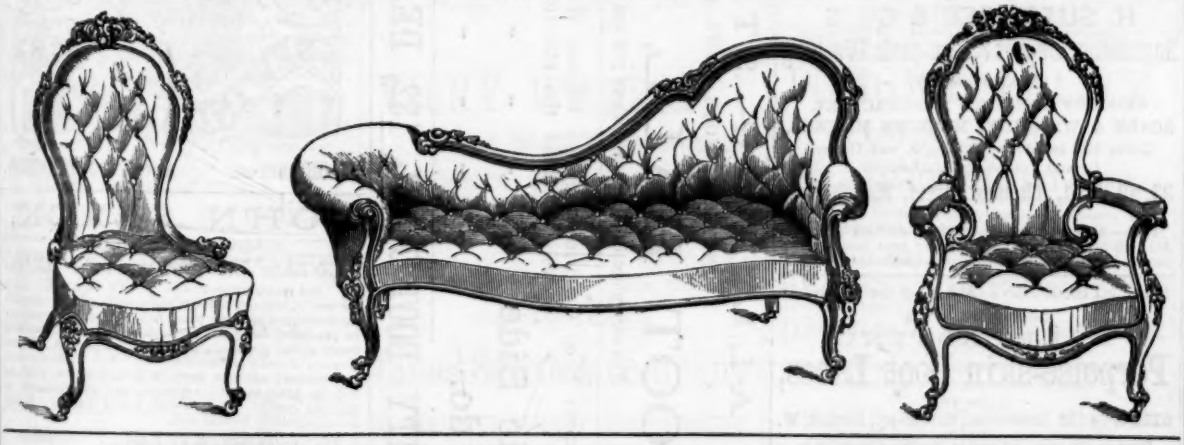

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